REPORT OF THE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL CIVIL SOCIETY NUTRITION NETWORKS MEETING

STRENGTHENING NUTRITION COORDINATION IN THE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGION

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1. BACKGROUND

The Graça Machel Trust in partnership with CARE international and the Scaling up Nutrition Civil Society Network Secretariat held the first Eastern and Southern Africa Region Civil Society Nutrition Networks meeting from the 29th to the 30th June 2017 in Maputo Mozambique.

The 2-day meeting was held to formalize the approach to regional (East and Southern Africa) coordination to support the Scaling up of Nutrition and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The regional network is aimed to strengthen coordination for joint advocacy between civil societies, support regional advocacy and help meet the critical need for media engagement, messaging and communication support to position Nutrition as a crucial development issue in the East and Southern Africa Region.

2. PARTICIPANTS

The meeting was attended by the representatives of the Civil Society Alliances from nine countries in Eastern and Southern Africa Region. These included Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, Madagascar and Zimbabwe

3. DAY ONE

Day one provided a platform for sharing works and experiences amongst the participants.

The Nutrition Program Manager of the Graça Machel Trust elaborated on the work of the Trust. Through partnership with the Civil Society in Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania the Trust supports advocacy to influence policy and recognition of Nutrition as a development issue. The Trust she elaborated does this through strengthening the capacity of the Civil Society and amplifying their voices at the regional and Global level voices with the ultimate aim to end hunger achieve food security and enhance health.

CARE International also shared their works in Food and Nutrition security in Southern Africa with a focus women farmer in a project “Her harvest our future “. The CARE International Advocacy and partnership coordinator in Southern Africa, further explained that CARE International had expanded to include advocacy in their programming to support their direct interventions with the aim of reaching 10 million people in Southern Africa. Advocacy will be aimed to drive the relevant parties to implement country and plans and policies that very well-articulated to support nutrition as a development issue. This he
emphasised will be best achieved through partnerships, sharing experiences and learning from each other.

Following the presentations from the Graça Machel Trust and CARE International. All Civil Society Alliance participants shared their best practices, strengths, achievements, gaps, key stakeholders that’s support/work with to amplify their work in country and at the Region and Global (Presentations in Annex)

**Highlighted Civil Society Alliance / country Strengths:**
Existence of National nutrition policies and strategic plans, increased appreciation of Nutrition as a development issue, National Nutrition plans and policies included in the National Development Plans, allocation of the resource to nutrition specific interventions, clearer messaging on Nutrition, media progressively reporting on nutrition issues. engaging the parliamentarians, mapping for CSOs, Advocacy and communication strategies, more focus on adolescent nutrition, engaging high level leaders, diversity from a monocrop system the case of Zambia, multi stakeholder coordination established especially at the National levels, more partnerships in in nutrition advocacy, general reduction in stunting, established and or Registered civil society Networks, more empowered communities to advocate for nutrition, report on Nutrition. Civil society Alliances strategic plans, getting the business Network interested in the issues of nutrition, institutionalising the issues on Nutrition in line ministries.

The Civil Society alliances highlighted the current status of the Civil society alliances and considering the Gaps that were presented agreed on the key focus areas for advocacy and joint collaboration

**Highlighted Civil Society Alliance / country Gaps:**
Inadequate data especially at the community to support advocacy (evidence based advocacy), improper alignment between Global level advocacy and country level advocacy, government adoption and implementation of the recommended proven impact oriented nutrition intervention, Civil society capacity to advocate for Nutrition, In country donor networks support , Insufficient Budget allocation to nutrition interventions, conflicting priorities by the government, dependant on Donors, Sharing experience very key, Budget tracking and advocacy, Staff turnover, Political cycle, Legal framework , Climate change, Nutrition champions, Political instabilities, Financial support for civil Society alliances, District nutrition plans, Private sector not compliant, Coordination , Organisations not supporting networks Human resource for alliances

The participants unanimously agreed on 4 key areas of focus for advocacy and joint collaboration by the East and Southern Africa Nutrition Civil Society Regional Network.

- Domestic Budget allocation for Nutrition
- Nutrition Communication and Messaging
- Coordination
- Institutionalising of the South and East Africa Regional Hub
4. **DAY TWO**

Day two was characterised by discussions to institutionalise the East and Southern Africa Nutrition Civil Society Regional Network. In preparation for this discussion the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Network Country advisor shared experiences from the already established Regional networks, Latin America regional group, Francophone Africa regional group, Asia Regional group. These groups she highlighted have been able to share advocacy work, made joint statements, made Collective engagements and shared learning on different thematic priorities through the regional networks.

She also elaborated on the SUN Civil Society theory of change with the aim: End of 2010 Scaling Up Nutrition Countries on track to reach the Sustainable Development Goals and the World Health Assembly targets and significant progress being made to reduce malnutrition, undernutrition and stunting.

The Participants in focusing on the four thematic areas focus for advocacy and joint collaboration by the East and Southern Africa Nutrition Civil Society Regional Network agreed on the following:

**Coordination**

- Enhance the Multisectoral and multi stakeholder’s coordination at the community, district, Country and Regional Level

**Domestics resource allocation for nutrition**

- Specific Budget allocation for Nutrition from the National Budget as per endorsed Global and Regional Commitments
- Nutrition budgetary disbursement of the committed budget
- Budgetary allocation to Nutrition in the key sector budgets
- Budgetary evaluation and tracking of the allocated budget in line with the community nutrition needs
- Human resource for Nutrition sensitive and specific Interventions and line Sectors

**Nutrition communication**

- Communication tools/messages to target the community level and the Regional Level
- Development of a Nutrition advocacy and communication strategy for the Regional
- Recruitment of more Nutrition Champions from the Community, District, Country and Regional level

**Institutionalising of the Regional**

- Nomination of the Graça Machel Trust to be the interim host of the Secretariat of the East and Southern Africa Civil Society Regional Hub.
George Ouma from the Kenya Civil Society Nutrition Alliance nominated to be the first Chairperson for the Eastern and southern Africa

Action points from the meeting

- Continued identification of Global, regional and National Partners to strengthen the East and Southern Africa Nutrition Civil Society Regional Network,
- develop a working Action Plan, identify key Global and regional Opportunities for Advocacy,
- Rotational Hosting of the Chairperson ship for the East and Southern Africa Nutrition Civil Society Regional Network,
- continued Strengthening national alliances Identification of common issues and solutions Joint advocacy to support national advocacy strategies Information
- Update sharing e.g. best practice, creation of regional groups of champion that countries can access, mobilisation of greater political will, increase visibility, strengthen Nutrition accountability, alignment with Regional Fora(FNS,).